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ABSTRACT

Two studies surveyed teachers in elementary and secondary schools to discover the relationships among teachers' willingness to be evaluated, their perceived control over the activities being evaluated, their input into the evaluation process, and their trust in the evaluators' accuracy and expertise. The first study asked 150 teachers in an elementary school district about their control over seven teaching domains, including learning objectives, classroom conduct, and educational materials. The second study, covering 200 teachers in a secondary school district, examined their perceptions of eight teaching activities, such as planning and pacing classroom activities, and of five components of evaluation, including data collection and choice of evaluative criteria. The results of both studies showed that, for most domains, teachers' receptivity to evaluation is positively related to their perceived degree of control over the domain or activity being evaluated. In addition, secondary teachers were found to be more receptive to evaluation when they have greater input into evaluation decisions and greater trust of evaluators' expertise. These research findings indicate that evaluation will be most effective when teachers are equitably represented in evaluation design and implementation and when they trust their evaluators. (RW)

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The Politics of Evaluation at the Local Level:
A View Through Teachers' Perspectives

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Teachers essentially view evaluation as imposed from above by administration. In fact, recent California legislation mandates districts to develop a uniform set of guidelines for use in evaluation of all certificated personnel. As increased external control, evaluation poses a threat to teacher autonomy to make decisions concerning teaching activities. Further, the potential loss in autonomy is even more for the individual than for the group, as the legislation regarding evaluation only provides for input to or consultation by teacher groups on evaluation processes. Lack of control over what is evaluated and how that evaluation is to be conducted could mean that teachers would be subjected to evaluation on activities over which they had no control. These conditions all have impact on teachers' receptivity or resistance to evaluation: it is an imposed, external control which threatens individual autonomy to make decisions on appropriate teaching activities.

The condition is further exacerbated by the fact that those who are to conduct evaluations (administrators) may not be trusted to make fair evaluations by those whom they are to evaluate (teachers). Further, teachers may also lack confidence in the expertise of their administrators to make accurate evaluative judgments. It is clear that teacher resistance or receptivity to evaluation can influence the implementation of evaluation mandates and be a key determinant to the future role of evaluation in education. Thus, the examination of the determinants of teacher resistance/receptivity to evaluation has both theoretical and practical significance and implications.

Two studies recently undertook to understand portions of this issue in terms of teachers' perceptions of resistance/receptivity to evaluation. In "The Role of Personal Controllability in Teacher Receptivity to Evaluation--an Exploratory Study," John Cooley surveyed elementary teachers, seeking to establish the nature of the relationship between the degree of autonomy a

teacher perceiveshim/herself as having over a specific teaching activity and that teacher's receptivity to evaluation on that activity. Pauline Paulin's study of "The Influence of Teacher Autonomy on Resistance to Evaluation" explored perceptions of evaluation held by secondary teachers, relating perceptions of willingness to be evaluated to: 1) autonomy or control over the teaching activity; and 2) autonomy over or input to the evaluation process itself.

Cooley collected data from teachers in an elementary school district of ten schools to test the hypothesis that teachers' perceptions of their personal controllability of an evaluated behavior had a direct correlation to their receptivity to being evaluated on that behavior: the more a teacher perceives an evaluated behavior as controllable, the more receptive to evaluation s/he is on that behavior. The connection between personal controllability and receptivity to evaluation comes from teachers' desires for autonomy. As professionals, they need to be able to make decisions related to the teaching act. Loss of that autonomy diminishes freedom to exercise self-competence. To be evaluated on an activity over which one has only partial control is basically unfair, and the professional teacher would likely not be receptive to such evaluation.

Cooley arrived at seven "domains" of teaching, developed in part from a survey asking teachers to indicate what they felt were the important components of the teaching act:

1. Selecting learning objectives
2. Structuring the materials to be presented
3. Motivating students
4. Controlling classroom conduct
5. Providing materials (texts, workbooks, etc.)
6. Providing a variety of student activities
7. Evaluating and providing feedback to students

The concepts of receptivity to evaluation and controllability of the evaluated

behavior were conceptualized on the questionnaire as follows:

Receptivity: "If you were to be evaluated on only one domain of instruction which would you choose? Circle one of each of the possible pairs (21) of domains."

Controllability: (1) "Indicate the extent to which you, personally and directly, can control each of the following seven domains of instruction by circling a number on each scale (zero = no personal or direct control; ten = total personal and direct control)."

(2) "It is generally agreed that the following domains of instruction are to some extent directly and personally controlled by teachers. Think back to yesterday in your class and circle a number in each scale below (zero - no personal or direct control; ten = total personal and direct control) to indicate the extent to which you actually controlled each of the domains."

Teachers were also asked to rank the seven domains for "their importance in contributing to student progress, using a scale of one (least important) to seven (most important). "

Cooley found that the domains specified were considered of high interest to the teachers surveyed and there was variation in the perceived controllability among the domains. The group measures supported the hypothesis: high controllability tends to mean high receptivity to evaluation. However, this was not consistent across all domains. For instance, "Control of student conduct," while high in personal controllability, was not rated high in receptivity to evaluation. Since the results were not conclusive across all domains, some question remains about the preciseness of the definition of controllability and confusion with or influence of organizational controls. There may be variables, not specified or understood, affecting the relationship.

However, if there is a positive relationship between teacher perceived

personal controllability and receptivity to evaluation, in the domain of Motivating Students, then this domain can be established as one central measure of teacher evaluation which teachers may not only not resist, but also advance. Additionally, if indeed there is an inverse relationship across various domains of teaching between organizational control and teacher personal and direct controllability, then teacher receptivity to evaluation must be further investigated as a function of varying degrees of organizational and personal controllability in the various domains. Several specific variables should probably be considered when the influence of the interaction of the personal and organizational control on teacher receptivity to evaluation is studied. Among them is the extent to which teachers perceive the evaluation to be of a particular purpose and the extent to which teachers perceive the evaluation as a threat to their autonomy.

In the second study Paulin collected data through a questionnaire distributed to the staff of a high school district containing seven schools. Voluntary participation yielded a return of 40.2 percent. Her study had three purposes. The first was to examine the relationship, from the perspective of teachers, between their unwillingness to be evaluated and the control which they perceived themselves as having over teaching activities. This purpose is similar to that of Cooley, except that the population studied is at the secondary level.

The "teaching control" section was a modified version of Cooley's questionnaire on teaching domains, more suitable for secondary teaching. The modification was done with the aid of hints from Pellegrin and Packard, et al., as well as on the basis of suggestions given by a group of district resource teachers.

Teachers were asked to circle a number which indicated the degree of

independence they felt they had over decisions relating to each of eight teaching activities ("1" = complete independence; "5" = no independence) as follows:

1. Setting learning objectives for the class
2. Establishing how much will be covered/in what order
3. Planning and pacing classroom activities
4. Choosing instructional materials
5. Choosing instructional methods
6. Maintaining student discipline in the classroom
7. Establishing the physical setting of the classroom
8. Establishing classroom organization and learning climate

Teachers were next asked to circle the number which indicated the extent to which they were willing to be evaluated on these activities ("1" = very willing; "5" = do not want to be evaluated).

Respondents indicated that they perceived themselves having a high degree of control over decisions associated with teaching activities, and a high degree of willingness to be evaluated on those activities. The least of those marking "1" or "2" for any activity was 75 percent ("Establishing physical setting"); the most marking "4" or "5" was 14 percent ("Establishing physical setting"). For the first purpose of the study, the examination of the relationship between willingness to be evaluated and control of teaching activity, a positive, though statistically weak relationship is shown: a high degree of control means a high degree of willingness to be evaluated (regression of means showed a positive relationship with $r^2 = .12$ at the .0001 significance level).

The second and third purposes were exploratory in nature. The former is an exploration, again from the perspective of teachers, of the relationship between their willingness to be evaluated and the control which they perceive to have over evaluation decisions. If teacher autonomy over (controllability of) teaching activities has a bearing on teacher resistance (receptivity) to evaluation on those activities, it seems logical to hypothesize that resistance to evaluation will also be affected by autonomy or control of input to that

evaluation process. The third purpose is an exploration of the extent to which the previously mentioned two relationships (control of teaching and receptivity to evaluation, and control of evaluation and receptivity to evaluation) are affected by the trust and confidence in the expertise which teachers have had in their evaluators. Evaluators have been conceptualized in part as communicators, and their credibility as (a) a function of trust and confidence which individuals have in their expertise, and (b) a determinant of audience receptivity to the communicator. In education, such trust and confidence have been defined as teacher-perceived evaluator objectivity, the extent of agreement between evaluator and teacher about appropriateness of goals and methods of controlling learning environments, and agreement about attitudes toward education.

The "Evaluation Control" section of the questionnaire asked teachers to indicate involvement in evaluation for each of five components of evaluation:

1. What data are collected for evaluation
2. How data are collected
3. Why data are collected and what is done with data
4. What criteria determines effectiveness
5. Who determines when criteria for effectiveness have been met

For each component of evaluation were listed five conditions of input, from (a) I alone decide; to (c) The decision is shared equally; to (e) Others alone make this decision. Teachers were asked to mark the box next to each condition to indicate how willing they were to be evaluated. Then they were asked to circle the condition that best described how much input they felt they actually did have to the evaluation decision.

"Trust" and "Confidence in Expertise" were measured by asking teachers to describe their total experience to date with the evaluation of their teaching. Trust: "Circle the number which indicates the extent to which you have had trust in your evaluators to make accurate evaluations of

your teaching"; Confidence: "Circle the number which indicates the extent to which you have had confidence in the expertise of your evaluators to make accurate evaluations of your teaching."

With regard to the second purpose, many more respondents were "willing" than "unwilling" to be evaluated under conditions where their input to the evaluation decision was at least equally shared with others or where they had more to say than others did. Conversely, many more respondents were "unwilling" than "willing" to be evaluated under conditions where others had more to say than they did. The above was true for all five decision types (what data, how data, etc.). From 76 to 84 percent of the respondents were unwilling to be evaluated when they had less than equal input to evaluation decisions.

With regard to the third purpose of the study, the relationship between control of teaching and willingness to be evaluated loses its significance for teachers with a high degree of either trust or confidence in expertise of evaluator and is strengthened for teachers with a low degree of either trust or confidence in expertise. However, the relationship between control of evaluation and willingness to be evaluated remains strong, regardless of how teachers feel about trust and confidence in expertise.

Teacher evaluation is most effectively carried out with the cooperation of teachers. Both studies show teachers are not unwilling to be evaluated. Paulin's study indicates that control of evaluation is an important issue, but that teachers did not seek total control of the process. From the teacher's perspective, it would appear that an evaluation plan and program which seeks equitable teacher representation will receive essential teacher cooperation.

Further, the importance of trust and confidence in the expertise of the evaluator would seem to instruct local administration to designate as

evaluators of teachers those individuals who have earned the trust and confidence of the teachers they are to evaluate, or at least be evaluators who are not perceived by their evaluatees as distrustful or lacking expertise.

Finally, teacher desire for autonomy or control was seen to extend beyond control of teaching activities to at least equitable control with administration in the process of evaluation of those activities. Evaluation programs will most effectively and fairly be carried out when teachers are meaningfully involved in purpose, plan and implementation of evaluation.

(Cooley and Paulin's work based on Ph.D. dissertations at University of California, Santa Barbara, 1980.)